

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT & STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

Response to Arguments

1. Upon further consideration, applicant's request for reconsideration of the finality of the rejection of the last Office action is persuasive and, therefore, the finality of that action is withdrawn. See interview summary for details.

Examiner's Amendment

2. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.
3. Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Albert S. Penilla on 20 November 2008.
4. The application has been amended as follows:

21. An apparatus for processing a substrate with a fluid meniscus, comprising:

a coupon assembly [[for]] holding a docking station, the docking station having a curved docking surface for defining a transition interface to a radial segment of the substrate which allows the fluid meniscus to enter and exit the surface of the substrate; and

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a coupon magazine mount for holding the coupon assembly, the coupon magazine mount defined to hold the curved docking surface of the docking station in an adjacent and coplanar orientation to a surface of the substrate and at least one proximity head that forms the fluid meniscus.

Allowable Subject Matter

5. Claims 1-2, 4-5, 9-15 and 21-28 are allowed.
6. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The closest prior art of record, U.S. Patent No. 5,749,469 to WILLIAMS, fails to teach or reasonably suggest the claimed invention. Specifically, WILLIAMS discloses structure readable on a docking surface with a curved surface adjacent to the surface of and coplanar with the substrate to be treated. However, WILLIAMS fails to teach or reasonably suggest the claimed apparatus comprising a proximity head which forms a fluid meniscus and a docking surface which forms a transition interface to a radial segment of the substrate capable of allowing the fluid meniscus to enter and exit the surface of the substrate, as claimed in independent claims 1, 5 and 21. For at least the foregoing reasons, the claims are believed to recite patentable subject matter.
7. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joseph L. Perrin, Ph.D. whose telephone number is (571)272-1305. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00-4:30.

9. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael E. Barr can be reached on (571)272-1414. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

10. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Joseph L. Perrin/
Joseph L. Perrin, Ph.D.
Primary Examiner
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